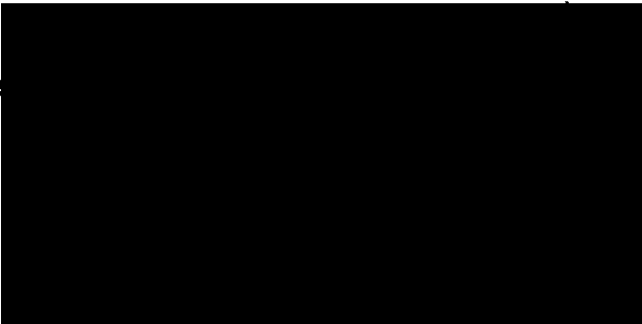


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Open. Up!

In an editorial, "Break It Up," in the issue of February 15, 1965, *The Nation* supported Senator Fulbright's proposal to separate foreign military and economic aid. That sensible and potentially illuminating idea has gone down to defeat. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted on March 29 to override Senator Fulbright, its chairman, and consider the Administration's \$3.4 billion foreign-aid request in a single bill.

The data set forth by Fred J. Cook in this issue show how cogent is Senator Fulbright's proposal. As matters stand, the Congress, not to mention the American taxpayer, is buying a pig in a poke every time the omnibus foreign-aid bill is passed. Under the present setup, it is almost impossible for a U.S. Senator, let alone a mere taxpayer, to obtain and discuss the facts about the expenditure of American economic aid. The Comptroller General reports on disbursements to the appropriate committees, but his reports are classified, and not lightly-classified either. But why? Sen. Wayne Morse asked the question in the Senate on August 3, 1964:

"Read what the Comptroller General has said. He is the watchdog. He is the agent of the Congress. . . . Before this debate is over I shall again pile on my desk the reports of the Comptroller General, some of which are marked 'Secret.' I have yet to read a single report of the Comptroller General that really is 'secret.' Every report of the Comptroller General that I have read contains material that should be made available to the taxpayers of the United States. If the taxpayers of the United States could read the shocking reports of the Comptroller General of the United States, they would demand a house cleaning of foreign aid, and quickly."

If economic aid were separated from military, there would be no excuse for withholding information from anyone interested. What reason could there be for not disclosing that of \$500,000 given to country X, \$350,000 was spent to construct a road and \$150,000 for a hospital?

Mr. Cook has lifted the curtain of secrecy on one corner of the foreign-aid mystery. In a sense, the disclosures only add to the mystery, but they do indicate that there are questions to be asked—and answered. The Shah of Iran, his agents and assigns, may be as pure as snow, dedicated to the cause of freedom and free enterprise throughout the world. But a lot of taxpayers' money has been passed around, for purposes unknown, and the people of the United States are entitled to a full accounting, in the Iran case now and in every single case of foreign economic aid in the future.

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